

Message Text

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TO AMEMBASSY JIDDA IMMEDIATE

INFO AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY AMMAN IMMEDIATE

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EXDIS FOR AMBASSADOR FROM SECRETARY

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, SY, JO, SA, US

SUBJECT: SYRIAN-JORDANIAN COOPERATION

REF: JIDDA 3366

1. YOU MAY PASS THE FOLLOWING TO FAHD IN RESPONSE TO HIS STATEMENT THAT HE WOULD BE PLEASED TO HAVE OUR COMMENTS ON THE POSSIBILITY OF A JORDANIAN-SYRIAN FEDERATION.
2. WE NOTED THE PRESS REPORTS AND RUMORS THAT FAHD REFERRED TO, BUT HAVE HEARD NOTHING SINCE THE HUSSEIN-ASAD MEETING THAT WOULD INDICATE THERE WAS ANY IMMINENCE TO SUCH A PROJECT.
3. THE JORDANIAN-SYRIAN RAPPROCHEMENT WHICH HAS BEEN SLOWLY DEVELOPING SINCE THE RABAT CONFERENCE AND ESPECIALLY

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SINCE SINAI II HAS BEEN FORMALIZED TO SOME DEGREE IN A

LOOSE STRUCTURE, CONSISTING OF A HIGHER COMMAND COUNCIL, HEADED BY PRESIDENT ASAD AND KING HUSSEIN, A JOINT SYRIAN-JORDANIAN HIGHER COMMITTEE UNDER THE TWO PRIME MINISTERS (OR UNDER CP HASSAN ON THE JORDANIAN SIDE AS IN THE MAY 8-10 MEETINGS) AND VARIOUS SUBCOMMITTEES. IT SEEMS LIKELY

THAT PRESENT TRENDS TOWARD INCREASED COOPERATION AND COORDINATION WILL CONTINUE.

4. THE CHARACTER OF JORDANIAN-SYRIAN COOPERATION APPARENTLY REMAINS ESSENTIALLY CONSULTATIVE AND EXPLORATORY. THE EMPHASIS HAS BEEN ON ECONOMIC COOPERATION (THE EASIEST AREA IN WHICH TO AGREE) AND IN WHICH SOME PROGRESS HAS TAKEN PLACE (E.G., IN MOVING TOWARD THE INTEGRATION OF THE RESPECTIVE NATIONAL AIR CARRIERS). THERE HAS ALSO APPARENTLY BEEN SOME VERY LIMITED COOPERATION IN THE MILITARY FIELD, SUCH AS EXCHANGES OF MILITARY PERSONNEL FOR TRAINING/FAMILIARIZATION PURPOSES. POLITICALLY, THE TWO COUNTRIES HAVE AGREED TO CONSULT AND COORDINATE THEIR ACTIONS ON MAJOR POLICY ISSUES.

5. THE MAY 10 COMMUNIQUE ISSUED AT END OF HUSSEIN'S VISIT TO DAMASCUS WENT NO FURTHER THAN TO PUBLICIZE A DECISION TO PROCEED WITH ADDITIONAL STEPS TOWARD SOME, STILL-UNDEFINED FORM OF "UNITY". THE COMMUNIQUE GAVE NO DETAILS ABOUT WHAT SUCH STEPS MIGHT BE.

6. WE HAVE NO DIRECT INFORMATION CONCERNING ANY OTHER DEVELOPMENTS THAT MIGHT HAVE TAKEN PLACE IN LAST WEEKEND'S MEETING. OUR ESTIMATE IS THAT FULL JORDANIAN-SYRIAN POLITICAL UNION IS UNLIKELY TO OCCUR IN THE FORESEEABLE FUTURE. IT IS CONCEIVABLE, HOWEVER, THAT A JOINT PROCLAMATION RE SOME FURTHER STEP IN THE DIRECTION OF A LOOSE "CONFEDERATION" -- PERHAPS A DECLARATION OF INTENT TO ESTABLISH A LIMITED RELATIONSHIP WITHIN A TIME DEADLINE -- COULD EMERGE DURING THE NEXT ASAD-HUSSEIN SUMMIT IN AUGUST, OR EVEN BEFORE. WE BELIEVE IT IS UNLIKELY THAT AN ANNOUNCEMENT OF EVEN A LIMITED "CONFEDERATION" WOULD BE MADE IN THE VERY NEAR FUTURE, IF ONLY BECAUSE OF SYRIA'S PROBABLE DESIRE TO AVOID RUFFLING PALESTINIAN

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FEATHERS AT THIS JUNCTURE.

7. YOU MAY WANT TO USE THE OPPORTUNITY TO POINT OUT TO FAHD THAT JORDAN'S WILLINGNESS TO ESTABLISH A CLOSER, MORE SIGNIFICANT RELATIONSHIP WITH SYRIA WILL ALMOST CERTAINLY INCREASE IF KING HUSSEIN ACQUIRES SOVIET AIR DEFENSE OR OTHER WEAPONRY. AMONG OTHER THINGS, IF HUSSEIN SHOULD WISH TO KEEP SOVIET ADVISERS AND TECHNICIANS TO A MINIMUM

IN JORDAN, HIS ARMED FORCES WOULD OF NECESSITY HAVE TO
RELY ON SYRIA FOR TRAINING JORDANIAN PERSONNEL TO OPERATE
AND MAINTAIN SUCH EQUIPMENT. AS WE HAVE PREVIOUSLY TOLD
SAUDIS, WE SEE GRAVE RISKS IN THESE TRENDS, WHICH WE ARE
NOT CERTAIN KING HUSSEIN HAS FULLY THOUGHT THROUGH. KISSINGER

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